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New values and attitudes in the didactics of teaching learning contents in the higher education system

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Abstract

The taking up of an innovative, receptive attitude, open to change, the wish to bring the educational strategies up to date and the necessity to promote the real merits in education make us monitor the didactic act much more carefully.

The study primarily aims at identifying the best way of correlating the three types of education, i.e., formal, non-formal and informal – and the active forms of relation and cooperation between the university education and the other educational agencies, at the social level. Its purpose is that of providing with a series of principles, basic ones, if we may add, absolutely necessary in the process of developing some balanced professional skills during the university years, thus: 1. teaching – learning would be much more efficient if it relies on real events or on social practice and experience than on theories with no applicability in actual situations; 2. all the participants in the instruction take part equally – identifying useful items in defining the professional profile through simulations or role-plays; 3. the identification of the contents for the instruction programme should follow three directions for analysis:

What must students know?

What do students need to know?

What have the students learnt so far and what could they further discover that is interesting and relevant for their development?

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1. Introduction

The accommodation with the changes occurring frequently at the economic, political and social level determines changes in the strategies used in the educational environment. The Romanian education is subject to influences from both internal and external directions. In order to cope with social and economical changes, on the one hand, and to enforce efficiency in the process of educational management, on the other hand, we present some of the educational politics solutions that can be taken up in the Romanian educational system: varied and

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approachable teaching profiles, incorporation of appropriate systems of quality insurance, and teachers training based on systematic research so that they would permanently accommodate with the real needs and requirements identified in the educational field.

Starting from the perspectives involved in the process of educational change, Anghelache (2012) frames a hypothesis which asserts that learning the change in the educational environment has three fundamental dimensions:

- E *the educational dimension*, by which the change becomes a fundamental activity of the school organisation or educational environment, interested in the analysis of the factors involved and in the dysfunctionalities occurred at the learning process level. Stress should be laid on: optimising the ways of organisation and development of the teaching-learning-assessment process; updating the curricula, redefining the parameters of communication between teacher and student and their pedagogical relationship, etc.
- E *the psychological dimension*, by which the educational change becomes a long-term process focused on:
 - development of characteristics acquired at the cognitive level by students;
 - acknowledgement of the characteristics occurred in the learning process previous to the initial one, at various ages, in compliance with the stages covered in the other learning cycles;
 - permanent development of the affective-motivational side of the students as a learning dimension;
 - removal/alleviation of teachers' psychological resistance to change;
 - solving the socio-cognitive conflict as a feature of change, recorded at the level of the teaching personnel;
 - the focus is laid on the individuals, who must alter their mentality and behaviour in order to acquire better satisfaction of their needs.
- E *the social dimension*, by which change can be analysed as a dynamic relationship with a clear purpose between school and community /general social context. Focus is laid on:
 - self-clarification of the school organisation, which presupposes knowledge of its own resources and self-defining its own needs;
 - self-determination of the school organisation to promote change, which presupposes learning.

Last but not least, the wish to update educational strategies and the necessity to promote real values in education through an efficient learning process require the identification of the best ways of correlation between the three types of education: *formal*, *non-formal*, and *informal*.

2. Innovative ways of organising learning contents

2.1. *Interdisciplinarity: principle and method of restructuring the learning contents at the higher education level*

2.1.1. *At the formal level*

The trend of an interdisciplinary organisation of the learning contents has been a constant in the curriculum policies in the last decades.

Interdisciplinarity presupposes a certain integration factor between various fields of knowledge and various approaches, but also the use of a common language allowing conceptual and methodological exchanges (Vaideanu, 1988).

According to the shifts operated between fields, some *ways of interdisciplinary organisation* may be singled out:

- interdisciplinarity in fields related through their specificity: psychology-pedagogy-sociology-ethics and deontology – pedagogical practice; medicine –biology-chemistry-physics-computer science; history-geography-literature-arts-theology; physical education-anthropology-psychology, etc;
- interdisciplinarity through methods shifts or scientific knowledge strategies;

- interdisciplinarity through concept transfer (exploitation of the connotations of a particular concept in other fields of knowledge);
- interdisciplinarity of the problems approached in disciplines compatible at the curriculum level.

Interdisciplinarity must be associated with other innovative strategies of organising learning contents, such as *modularisation*.

The didactic modules are organised on *learning activities* instead of subjects. The didactic module as a form of organising learning contents must comply with three basic criteria, according to D'Hainaut, (1981):

- E to define a learning unit;
- E to have well-defined objectives and its own function;
- E to advance evaluation tests in view of acquiring feedback.

The organisation of interdisciplinary teaching activity must consider the social, cultural and ethnic diversity of students. Teaching-learning will be more efficient if it relies on real events or social practices and experiences than on theories inapplicable in actual situations.

2.1.2. *At the informal level*

The contents integration around a practical pole (applications in vocational, familial, social group contexts).

2.1.3. *At the non-formal level*

The contents integration must be carried out around some fundamental activities (research, artistic creations, professional training, literary circles, culture houses). The students or the attendees in educational activities identify useful elements in shaping the professional profile with the help of simulations or role-playing.

2.2. *The university professor profile. Attitude and performance in teaching learning contents at the higher education level*

The professor has competence in planning, organising and assessing the didactic activity.

- E s/he identifies and responds to the students training necessities, projecting learning strategies starting from their experience and availability;
- E s/he identifies the psychological-moral profile for each student (the emotiveness level, personality traits, the moral development level, the aspiration level in the chosen field);
- E s/he adjusts the didactic methodology in accordance with the group characteristics (ethnic, economic, social and cultural specificities of the community);
- E s/he ensures the coordination of the theoretical framework with the learning practice;
- E s/he analyses and assesses students activity according to minimal standards of professional competence which are introduced to them at the commencement of studying the disciplines in the curriculum;
- E s/he makes a constructive assessment, stressing positive aspects and advances adequate means of elimination of drawbacks; the assessment is individual and confidential;
- E the teacher has abilities of projecting, logical structuring, contents psycho-pedagogical transposition, as well as availability for critical analysis and improvement;
- E the teacher promotes self-assessment as a form of self-reflection upon the acquired abilities and attitudes;
- E the teacher uses feedback as a means of self-correction of the educational process and monitors learning progress or regression.

2.3. *Students profile and self-assessment*

The identification of learning programme content should follow three directions for analysis:

- E What must students know?
- E What do students need to know?
- E What have the students learnt so far and what could they further discover that is interesting and relevant for their development in various contexts?

Starting from these premises, we advance a new operational strategy in teaching/ students learning, focusing on new directions. These interventions at the level of the educational act will change the patterns or model of the present-days student:

a. In accordance with what the student knows, we shall establish new quality standards concerning teaching/learning/assessment in higher education.

Objective: to focus the study programmes on the graduate's competences required in the labour market.

b. Ensuring transparency in the education process will lead to balance and quality and will determine the students' balanced cognitive, affective, and social development.

Procedural strategies

►	Explaining the objectives for each activity
►	Permanent feedback
►	Introducing the assessment forms and criteria in due course
►	Open attitude, stressing successes, self-assessment

c. The students will be much more involved in their own training if projecting of the learning activities has their learning necessities as primary objective.

Objective: to focus on **learning necessities**, which presupposes the analysis of students' profile in accordance with the performance standards established at the beginning of the training process for each discipline.

d. Encouragement of autonomy and teaching from the perspective of permanent learning

Objective: to provide students with techniques for efficient learning, thought development, and building the habit of constant learning.

e. Broadening of teaching social dimension (*S.E.. Bernat, 2003*)

Objective: teaching as a means to bring academic life closer to the life of the community.

Educational activities are designed to help the students walk the path to knowledge, towards the acquisition of new behaviour traits which develop their personality. We present below some values aimed at during the learning process:

- E commitment to the objectives proposed in the curriculum;
- E acceptance of the values and norms imposed;
- E the sense of trust and mutual dependence (see teacher-student relationship);
- E full involvement and consensual decision-making;
- E free flow of information and communication;
- E open expression of feelings and disagreements;
- E amiable and empathetic solving of conflicts.

3. Conclusion

Quality provision in the educational system in a strategic manner, by means of high and strict standards, will result in improving the quality and effectiveness in the national and European educational system, thus obtaining elite performance in all professional areas.

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